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tion between the two regions in the future.

R. Michael Feener

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A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand, Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds

MAURIZIO PELEGGI, ed.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2015, 208p.

When a stellar cast gathers for the festschrift, the result is both a thoughtful reflection on the past oeuvre by Craig J. Reynolds, who inspired the essays, and a peek into the various issues and debates that will characterize the future of Thai studies.

If not directly mentioned, Reynolds' influence and carefully crafted concepts from his decades-long career in Thai and Southeast Asian Studies pervade the book. This can partly be attributed to the contributors' association with Reynolds as his students, colleagues, and friends. However, it would be wrong to assume that the volume represents a closed academic circuit. Reynolds' opuses span from the 1970s to the 2010s and counting. His seminal works illuminate important aspects of these often turbulent decades, such as the analyses of Buddhist and Marxist writings in Thailand and beyond, the charting of previously under-explored terrain of historiography in Southeast Asia, the clearing of the ground for intellectual and social histories in the area, the probing of the ideas of national identity and globalization, and the meditation on varied aspects of power, including its unorthodox linkage with magic and local knowledge. All the while, he widely borrows conceptual tools from, *inter alia*, semiotics, feminism, structuralism, and post-structuralism, but always subjects them to scrutiny and test in the Southeast Asian weather. The editor Maurizio Peleggi's introductory chapter well captures this across-the-board and seasoned nature of Reynolds' works and thoughts.

In the essays that follow, three Reynolds' leitmotifs emerge quite clearly, namely: (1) *power*

in its multifarious manifestations, (2) an emphasis on the *outcasts* of Thai history, and (3) *knowledge*, especially in its written forms of manual and historiography. All three permeate the chapters, although some bring each of these themes out more evidently than others.

One common ground of all authors is that power operates in many fields. It operates in art historiography, in artifact of museological practices, in Buddha statues, and in beauty. Rather than in the eye of the beholder, according to Peleggi in his own essay (Chapter 4), Thai art is a discursive field of power, an intense playground of national myth and colonial rule. Power also operates in the visual sense as art history (and arguably all histories) works “to make the past synoptically visible” (p. 92), especially through classifying and inscribing meaning in objects. In Chapter 7, Yoshinori Nishizaki argues along the same line, though in a different context, that visibility is a matter of power. In his analysis, it is inscribed in a grandiose observation tower in the provincial city of Suphanburi, the public work that has become a symbol, a source of collective pride and social identity.

We can also approach power via semiotics and politics of translation, as Kasian Tejapira illustrates in Chapter 9 where he discusses the term “governance” in Thailand in the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis and the “shock doctrine” of neoliberalism. Kasian skillfully traces the transformation of the IMF’s notion of “good governance” as part of its liberalization and privatization package imposed on crisis-ridden economies, to its Thai translation as *thammarat*, which was picked up and used by several groups with various intentions, be it liberal, communitarian, or even authoritarian.

The collection also demonstrates that power exists in all levels of a society: it is concentrated in the elites’ hands, but also practiced by the subalterns. When these forms of power clash, various mechanisms are called forth to resolve the tension, and they can be brute, hegemonic, discursive, or emotional. This formulation of power is encapsulated in a number of essays in the volume.

In Chapter 1, Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit weds the figure of an outcast with the complexities of knowledge/power through the story of Khun Phaen. Based on classic folk literature previously translated by the authors, the essay distills basic Thai modalities of power, arguing that it can mean many things for different people in different contexts. Even the most common conceptualization of power as *authority* can have varied meanings. When viewed from the apex of society, it can mean the delivery of order, stability, and protection. When viewed from below, however, formal authority, protective as it might be, often causes alarm since it can inflict distress, violence, and even sudden death on ordinary people. But Baker and Pasuk also characterize power in another mode for our hero in the story: *mastery*. Khun Phaen derives power through a mastery of skills, magic, spirits, forces of nature, and himself—in short, the mastery of knowledge, or lore, acquired through learning and practice, which stood in contrast to authority originated in birth and hierarchy. Mastery protects Khun Phaen and his loved ones against danger; it even enables him to defend his country for the king. These two bases of power—authority and mastery—eventually

collide in the climax of the tale. But the whole legend can also be read as having built upon the tension between them.

In light of Reynolds' previous study of Thai "how-to" manuals, the tale of *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* can also be seen as a manual that offers guidelines for living—how to understand the world, how to behave and deal with others, as well as how to approach power and politics. Diachronically, Villa Vilaithong's essay (Chapter 8) exemplifies the implications of manuals relating to the management of oneself. Here, Khun Phaen becomes a 1980s businessman who found himself in the dizzying world of globalized competition. Yet, he could find solace in *Khoo Khaeng* (Competitor) Magazine, through which he could learn the lore (e.g. marketing data and statistics), practice magic and charms (marketing and advertising techniques), protect himself against danger in war-like situations (as described by the magazine), and hope to win the battle (beating competitors). Of note is Villa's discussion of *Khoo Khaeng*'s role in the making of the "corporate man," subjectivated through embellishment of consumer goods, "dress for success," and lifestyles that reflected "notions of refinement, self-discipline, and Westernization" and "transformed middle-class corporate men's appearance both at work and play" (pp. 177–178). The "beautiful apparition" in the tale of *Khun Phaen* meets its counterpart in *Khoo Khaeng*. Villa traces this manual from its inception until the expiry of its shelf life, ironically as a "victim," and not a corporate "last man," of the 1997 economic crisis.

The theme of the outcast in Thai society continues in four more essays, although each contains its own distinct flavor. The most seditious would be Patrick Jory's genealogy of republicanism in Thailand in Chapter 5. In a country usually considered monarchical and conservative, proudly brandishing its long tradition of royalism, Jory argues against the grain that republicanism has enjoyed an underground following for at least 130 years, can be traced in both liberal and communist camps, and found among such diverse groups as princes in the days of absolutism, commoners, literati, politicians, military officers, political parties, and mass movements.

In contrast, the other three outcasts are individuals who are less out-and-out rebellious than those in Jory's piece, yet no less anti-establishment and, as a result, they also suffered from various forms of punishment and discipline. One such individual is the audacious Cham Jamratnet, a member of parliament from southern Thailand, whose life experiences directly fluctuated with the ever-shifting political landscape in the wake of the 1932 revolution. Cham's politics is difficult to categorize in ideological terms, but his colorful actions both inside and outside of the parliament can be interpreted as siding with the poor and the voiceless. His daring performance as a "common-man MP" earned him five successful elections, coverage in national media, and an affectionate commemoration in his hometown. But it also landed him in prison and resulted in an investigation of his sanity. In Chapter 6, James Ockey aptly links the curious case of Cham with the rise of psychiatry in Thailand after the 1950s and contends that the scientific discourse was in itself a power that suppressed as it was listed to the side of authority to relegate those who dared chal-

lenging the norm.

Another paramount example is Prince Prisdang Chumsai, the “renegade royalist,” who was reluctantly rebellious to King Chulalongkorn when, in 1885, the prince led a group of royals and demanded a constitutional monarchy at the time when centralization process was only at its nascence. In a series of backlashes, Prisdang found himself ignored, shamed, marginalized in the new bureaucracy, exiled for 20 years, blacklisted and harassed after he returned to Siam towards the end of his life. Amidst all of these, he was ridiculed, rumored to be mad, and murdered historiographically, that is, assigned to oblivion. I consider Tamara Loos’s analysis of Prisdang (Chapter 3) most innovative in terms of approach. Loos draws attention to the hitherto little known place of emotion in Thai history, to the “regime of emotion” that sanctioned against individuals through rumors, gossip, discrediting, favoring and disfavoring (rather than through, say, law), and emotional suffering, the ambiguous angst one bears throughout one’s life. As such, Loos brings to light the abstruse interstices of power and expands its notion in the Thai context, beyond power as authority, knowledge, discourse, or simple disciplining.

In the same text, Loos examines the genre of autobiography, a new mode of writing in the time of Prisdang. Autobiography is not “an objective and disinterested pursuit but . . . a work of personal justification . . .” (p. 75), and for Prisdang, who was consigned to the disgraceful corner of history, it was particularly urgent to write back. Autobiography allowed him to engage in “a historically situated practice of self-representation,” in which he can perform and construct “his identity through the narration of his own life” (p. 76) and to negotiate his place in history. In this sense, history has been inimical to an awful lot of people. And it is arguably more so for commoners than members of the elite like Prisdang. The fourth outcast, KSR Kulap (1835–1922), is a literatus and probably the first commoner whom we can call a “historian” by trade (although the term did not exist in his time). Like Prisdang, he engaged in writing to counter the weight of history. But rather than writing *against* history, he wrote *another* history. Or, rather, a different historiography and method: as Thongchai Winichakul points out in Chapter 2, Kulap wrote at a time when the sense of historicity and its writing was being drastically rethought, and Kulap’s methodology represented an older mode of historiography. The price of being outmoded was high: he was charged several times by the royals, imprisoned, and his sanity was called into question. “Fabrication, stealth, and tainting of historical records” were the charges but all these were, according to Thongchai, based on modern criteria of historiography. Previous studies of Kulap, including Reynolds’, point to the exclusivity of historical writing in the aristocratic circle and Kulap’s transgression into it. Thongchai makes a larger claim: this was an epistemic clash between two modes of historiography, and Kulap was on the losing side.

The formal charges were accompanied by denigration and ridicule: for instance, the word *ku*, from Kulap, was associated by the royal elite with “inventing a fact” and exaggeration, and it still has the same connotation in today’s vocabulary. A chilling point that comes forward from these

essays is that formal authority is akin to fire: it can protect one against coldness, but it can also burn. And when it wants to burn, it summons instruments of suffering: brute force, legal charges, imprisonment, accusation of madness, forcing into oblivion, shaming, discrediting, harassment, rumors, and ridicule. The result can vary from death, despair, exile, voiding of subjectivity and meaning by being ignored, silenced, or emotionally tormented. Today's Thailand is, once again, turning towards authoritarianism and this pattern of suffering is all too eerily familiar.

The only thing I miss from reading this otherwise brilliant collection is its comparative aspect, which would have allowed it to live up to its title, a *sarong* for Clio. Hidden here and there in the articles, comparison with other areas could be brought out more forcefully, and its implications for the discipline of History, and not only Thai history, could be more engaged with and debated. Nonetheless, the essays are a pleasant read and a must for scholars working on Thailand and Southeast Asia. Above all, the authors in the book have composed a worthy tribute to Craig J. Reynolds by building upon his works and taking them further afield.

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***Luzon at War: Contradictions in Philippine Society, 1898–1902*
(with an introduction by Vicente L. Rafael)**

MILAGROS CAMAYON GUERRERO

Quezon City: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2015, 295p.

Luzon at War has been long in coming. As a dissertation at the University of Michigan in 1977, it has eluded Filipino historians for years; that it is finally out as a book is a happy occasion. Prior to the writing of *Luzon at War*, its author—Milagros Guerrero—has co-written with the celebrated Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo the highly influential *History of the Filipino People*, and has also worked with renowned historian Renato Constantino in the edition of the five-volume compendium *The Philippine Insurgent Records*. As such, when she arrived in the United States for her graduate studies, wrote Vicente Rafael, she “was already known” as a scholar of the Philippines (p. 3). She has delved into the genre of “history from below” and studied the tumultuous period of the Philippine Revolution and the nascent republic from the perspective of the periphery and the marginalized. She has looked beyond the political developments in social and political centers of Malolos and Manila, examining the social realities of the Revolution among the masses in the provinces instead. Using declassified sources on the Filipino state, taxation, landownership, and popular movements in particular, *Luzon at War* illustrates the variegated discord in society from 1898 to 1902, as the Spanish colonizers exited and the republic fought for its existence by warding off the